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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Putnam proposal would streamline insurance for low income children

WASHINGTON – Calling the number of uninsured children in Florida "embarrassing," Congressman Adam Putnam (R-Fla.) introduced legislation today that would make it easier for children in low income families to receive health insurance coverage under the State-Children Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

"The Healthy Kids One Stop Act will remove barriers to families to enroll their children in SCHIP," said Putnam. "No matter whether you are a Republican or a Democrat, we can all agree that making health care available to those children already eligible should be a top priority."

According to recent reports based upon the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, Florida ranks second in the nation for the percentage of children in the state without health insurance (19.1 percent) and third for the actual number of uninsured children (approximately 800,000). This data also shows that 60.7 percent of Florida's uninsured children come from families most likely to be eligible for public assistance.

Putnam's proposal would allow states to merge the application process for other programs, such as the National School Lunch Program, with the SCHIP application. As a result, the parent would not have to resupply information that has already been provided to the State.

"Florida's participation rate is embarrassing. The application process currently can be very complex, and that is one of the reasons Florida compares so poorly to the rest of the U.S.," said Putnam. "Too often our vision for reducing the number of uninsured is clouded by bureaucracy. This bill will allow one-stop enrollment for low income families."

Since 2001, Putnam has represented Florida's 12th Congressional District, which includes most of Polk County and portions of Hillsborough and Osceola counties.

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